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Tolerance in the Context of Soft Globalization

Larisa Korobeynikova *

National Research Tomsk State University, Tomsk, Russia

Abstract

The proposed paper presents an attempt of interpretation of tolerance within the boundaries of the author's concept of the soft globalization, i.e the implementation of globalization with a mental form, which constructs normatively attractive alternative to interpretations of globalization in material, mainly economical form, presented in recent social and political issues.

The concept of soft globalization opens new perspectives for understanding the tolerance phenomenon. Tolerance is possible in the sphere of cultural values at the level not only meaning, but also purposes, where the other's alterity becomes not only the subject of legitimation, but also value. It is provided by the conventionality of cultural world as the product of creative human activity. The essence of uniqueness of human being manifests in the process of understanding of the Self through the Other. Not simply recognizing the Other, but applying tolerance to the Other's alterity might be the condition of defining a person's own place and sense of existence in multicultural world. Tolerance requires realization of such understanding procedure in which the Other, on the hand, should remain the same alter to us, but, on the other hand, should become ours in its alterity. Type of tolerance, which is formed inside the process of soft globalization on the basis of the quintessence of the spiritual formation, provides the conditions for such understanding procedure appearance, creating openness of a person both to cultural differences (cultural, ethnic, religious minorities) and to cultural unification (dominated culture). Soft globalization put at its centre the idea of a global citizenship under a new paradigm of tolerant global citizenship.

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1. Introduction

Traditionally, a tolerance has been interpreted as a system of norms, based on the democratic principles of equality, freedom and non-violence in understanding oneself from the attitude to the Other- these principles set the main qualities of the political process, which produces the constant environment for the existence of social values and devices of life regulation. However: even within the boundaries of the democratic paradigm of politics, which exemplifies the principle of tolerance in political practice, we can detect certain repressive mechanisms for the functioning of politics. Democratic society decision making process is not always will be able to eliminate conflict of belief and value among its population, because the social agreement cannot be achieved by violent means, so that intolerance appears in contemporary social life. The conditions of development of contemporary diverse world do not require to refuse

* Larisa Korobeynikova. Tel.: 8-906-956-96-11
E-mail address: larisa_korobeynikova@rambler.ru

repressive mechanism of political regulation, but to add to them a non-repressive mechanism of soft globalization, namely globalization conceived in mental form. Globalization presently occurs in a strict material form, and this has both advantages and disadvantages. Advantages: for example, wide spread of modern forms of Western life in the world. Disadvantages: for example, cases of attempted globalization meet negative responses by several nations, ethnic and cultural minorities, religious confessions - all this sometimes brings on the political scene phenomena of extremism of and terrorism: the development of globalization in a strict material form leads to the appearance intolerance. An alternative to this is a soft form of globalization that could instead put at its centre the idea of a global citizenship under a new paradigm of tolerant global citizenship - this could balance or harmonize global and local interests and values, generate equal opportunities for members of various nations, cultures, ethnic groups or minorities acting on the global civil arena.

This paper mainly deals with two dimensions characterizing the globalization process: a material dimension which leads to the appearance of intolerance, and a mental dimension that presents an alternative to such views: a set of principles inspiring a new type of tolerance formation. In accordance with this, the first part of the paper will discuss some of the most relevant debates and topics concerned with the phenomenon of globalization. The second part of the paper will elaborate the concept of soft globalization including new type of tolerance formation. The main author's intuitions and reflections are summarized in the conclusion.

2. Review of related research

The pinnacle concerning a discourse about globalization is registered in the nineties of the XX C. Theoretical debates in this period have different appraisals: from a negative definition of globalization as a global babble to a wide spread fascination for globalization. In spite of innumerable discussions and booms in the literature, the theorizing on this problem is in part developed. Economics, International Relations, Political Sciences, Sociology, Legal Sciences, etc. are all concerned with the analysis of the phenomenon of globalization, though globalization remains a pretty marginal topic for other disciplines. The discourse about globalization cannot be located inside one problem, it includes various dimensions, which extend the field of scientific knowledge and theoretical representation around the idea of globalization. Such discursive approach can be characterized as an "intersectional approach to globalization".

In most recent theoretical debates, depending on the character of the process of globalization (homogeneous or fragmentary), two trends of investigation of this process arise: (i) globalization on the basis of the idea of progress which leads to an homogeneous world (universalism); (ii) globalization on the basis of the representation of the world's real diversity (multiculturalism). Theorists of globalization stress the fact that an economic-homogenization paradigm of globalization is becoming powerful in both academic and popular usage. They then focus their attention on the increased integration of the global economy and its homogenizing effects on state policy and culture. As for the homogeneous (i.e. universalistic) discussions, the tendency for many issues to assume opposite values - on the segment comprising corporative versions of globalization and elite versions of globalization - arises. Even popular anti-globalistic movements are nothing else but representations of the globalization process in alternative forms. So: the contradictions associated with the process of globalization are not external with respect to such process, but instead integrated in it.

Multicultural concepts of globalization, based on the recognition of the world diversity, are popular because of their anti-repressive and tolerant form. Appraisals of multiculturalism as an intellectual trend, which could be evaluated as the core of recent multi-globalization processes, are controversial (as it is for example demonstrated in the works by authors like J. Searle, R. Rorty and C. Taylor).

The theorists of globalization stress the fact that modern globalization processes include many instances of globalization. In contemporary social theory several basic elements of globalization are put into focus:

- deterritorialization, according to which a growing variety of social activities takes place, irrespective of the geographical location of the participants;
- interconnectedness across existing geographical and political borders;
- speed of velocity of the social activity;
- evaluation of globalization as a relatively long-term process;
- understanding of globalization as a multi-pronged process, since deterritorialization, social interconnectedness, acceleration manifest themselves in many different areas of social activity (Globalization, 2011).

In social analysis, one finds three main theoretical positions about the interpretation of globalization: radical globalism, which defends the idea of a gradual unity of national states and cultures in the single world community; moderate globalism, which argues that the process that brings together nations and cultures will generate the appearance of an opposite process of differentiation; anti-globalism, which maintains that globalization will lead to conflicts among national cultures. A concept stands by itself among the others, it is the concept of globalization as hybridization which presents an attempt of synthesis of the local and the global (in terms of what is sometimes defined 'glocalization'). Within the boundaries of this concept, globalization represents an increase of possible types of organization of social structures: transnational, macro-regional, micro-regional, municipal, local. Not only these types of social organization are important, but informal spaces too, which are created in spot areas between this or that organization: emigrants, refugees, and so forth.

Political theorists have been busy addressing the normative implication of globalization. Globalization is discussed in debates between cosmopolitans and communitarians. Cosmopolitanism has been developed on the universalistic values of modern moral and political thought. Communitarians deny the need to overcome international inequality, but often criticize the tendency of cosmopolitanism to defend global legal and political reforms. Attempts to achieve global justice are suspicious. Both cosmopolitans and communitarians discuss the prospects of democratic institutions at a global level. D. Held argues that globalization requires the extension of liberal democratic institutions (Held D., 1995, Held, D. and Mc Grew A. and Goldblatt D. and Perraton J., 1999). In contrast with D. Held, J. Habermas and other communitarians argue that democratic politics presupposes feelings of trust, commitment and belonging that remain uncommon at the transnational level.

3. Soft Globalization

In spite of several fruitful findings concerning the investigations of the process of globalization, many theories show a common shortcoming: they study the problem only at the empirical level, thus putting into focus only one side of the globalization process - viz. the material side, which leads to the formation of the intolerance. The appeal to the empirical level alone is one of the main sources of misunderstanding of the real nature of the problem. The concept of soft globalization is built on the attempt to develop a philosophical analysis of this phenomenon, by searching the means for an intensification of the analysis of the problem, and all this by stressing the importance to investigate the spiritual dimension of globalization, which could prompt the formation of a global democracy. This innovation is implemented by studying the globalization process in connection with the evolution of civilizations.

Civilization is one of the world structures, which contains the information about the material and mental form of humans' activities. The development of the world civilizations has an irregular character which could be described, at the phenomenal level, in the stages of appearance, growth and disappearance of the civilizations themselves. Civilization, as a complicated structure, has a meta-stable steadiness. In order to keep its integrity, so that periodically to overcome the tendency to stochastic disintegration, civilization should exist in regimes able to slow down the processes and restore the general temp of the substructures of development. Considered under this respect, globalization and de-globalization function as social regulators for the equilibrium of the energetic balance-imbalance of civilization. The process of regulation of civilization's balance-imbalance, through the processes of globalization-de-globalization, embodies the disposition of a system to reach a stable equilibrium. Such view has provided the opportunity to produce new interpretations about the history of human civilization as a process of self-organization of human communities in time and space. The motivating force behind civilization's development is an accumulated energy which consists of material and immaterial complexes, depending on consuming energy obtained from natural resources within occupied territory. Civilization development is connected with territoriality as basis of flourishing of civilization. The process of civilization's accumulation of new territories in forms of expansions, displacement of people, wars, and conquests leads to the appearance of an oligarchic tendency, which leads to unity of the local communities into the universal organization with centralized direction (globalization). So material globalization, historically, especially in modern times, occurs in the form of Empire. The local tendencies of the communities' development (localization) are opposite to the process of globalization when it brings about the disintegration of the global communities (disintegration of great Empires in history of culture, disintegration of the Soviet Union in modern times).

Globalization and localization represent the tendencies of unity and disintegration of communities simultaneously coexisting in the history of civilization given the tendency of a pole to dominate. I argue that globalization (in spite of the existing interpretations of this phenomenon as universalism, interculturalism, multiculturalism, etc.) represents the social response to the tendencies of civilization's parceling out, or disintegrating, or even getting destructive.

Globalization is periodically replaced by the alternative tendency - localization, which embodies the social response to the tendencies of unification: unity of communities under the aegis of the single dominating community. So globalization and localization carry out the function of a social regulator of 'balance-imbalance' concerning the civilization's development. The development of Ancient Rome, for example, can be considered as a manifestation of a kind of material globalization in the history of civilization. Ancient Rome kept inside itself the highest levels of progress of Ancient Greece, the Ancient Middle East and so on, and thanks to Ancient Rome's influence over the world the development of human civilization as a whole moved forward greatly - in this period. But the material orientation of the process of globalization brought about the crash of the Roman Empire. The next significant fluctuation of globalization can be observed now, when the western civilization moves forward the development of a human civilization as a whole. But in order for this process to be successful, globalization must assume not only a material shape, but also a mental character, a character oriented towards a new type of tolerant formation.

My thesis is that concept of soft globalization allows to reach balanced state between cultural diversity and universality through development of spiritual side of human being, including a new type of tolerance formation. Tolerance becomes both a context of discussion and a strategy of existence in the world of distinctions, on which they are appreciated and not only kept, but also multiplied. The conditions of development of recent world require clearance the idea of tolerance. First of all, the tolerance is not identical to the euphoric attitude to everything different. The selection towards diversity is also required. Uniqueness of tolerance represents in understanding oneself from the attitude to the Other. Tolerance finally leads to a basic recognition of legitimacy a position of the Other and to the impossibility of the Other's alterity elimination. It certainly refers to the theoretical reflection, not to the practice where violence, manipulation and reprogramming of alien consciousness remain an universal phenomena. The essence of uniqueness of human being in contemporary diverse world manifests in the process of understanding the self through the Other. The tolerance means not simply understanding the Other, but acceptance, recognition and justification. The way of representation of the Other defines the way of attitude to it or constitute the tolerance itself. Due to these properties the tolerance appears to be both the way of understanding of the Other and transformation of alien in one's own, and understanding of the Other's in its alterity. Tolerance assumes not simply understanding, but also recognition of legitimacy of the Other's alterity. Where are the bases for such steps? They are in specifics of being in cultural world. Cultural values can not refer for the substantiation and justification to the referents unrelated to them, such as facts, experiments or indicators of their significance for their survival. But then there is the only way of their acceptance: relation to cultural experience. In fact in a certain sense all own is alien and becomes a part of our identity only when it discovered resources in culture. The foundation of the new type of tolerance formation is laid in such type of values, which would be adequate to contemporary understanding of the horizons of human being. Soft form of globalization leads to a quintessence of spiritual formation that could put at its centre the idea of global citizenship under a new paradigm of tolerant global citizenship: this could harmonize a global and local cultural values.

4. Conclusion

I have critically examined, in this paper, the main approaches concerning the investigation of social, political, processes of globalization. All these aspects characterize the process of globalization so that to make it a mainly material process. My own hunch is that all such approaches are important, that all of them highlight some relevant and fruitful scientific findings about the phenomenon of globalization and its contemporary occurrence - for example, the evaluation of the process of globalization as a universal, multicultural and trans-cultural process; or the role of globalization for the formation of a global space that could preserve differentiation with respect to production, deterritorialization, world politics and finance; or the transformation of heterogeneous areas of social activity in the global era; or the analysis of global legal and political reforms; or the description of crucial cases about the technology of the global net; etcetera. Nevertheless, my main purpose in this article has been to argue that only globalization understood in a mental form could in the end be successful. Evolution of civilization in the form material globalization will not last long, for this process determines the destruction of civilization itself; new technologies will bring together and then push away differences between globalized communities, thus creating an unstable development for the civilization. In the process of soft globalization, non repressive mechanisms of social regulation could instead be realized. Given the conditions of contemporary multiethnic and multicultural world, globalization processes should be oriented gradually to the leveling of all globalized communities on the basis of the quintessence of the spiritual formation which leads to a new type of tolerance formation - and this implies, among the other things, the elimination of the opposition between Western liberal societies and Eastern fundamentalist societies.

Fundamentalist societies are burdened with religious extremism, which is expression of direct attempts to meet the basic needs of human existence. This attempts are based on the principle of survival as a natural principle of self-preservation for human beings. Elimination of the opposition between liberal and fundamentalist societies can be achieved on the basis of a new type of spiritual formation, which escapes and perhaps solves the problem of human survival - such process is oriented toward the pure material side of the life of the human beings. Within the boundaries of a new type of spirituality, a new democratic politics permitting a dialogue for distinct religious confessions and the ground for their consensus through tolerance could be achieved. As final remark, I think that only in this case a society decision-making process and the content of its law could incorporate solutions to the conflicts of belief and value among the population, and this because a new tolerant human being, who is not burdened by a destructive religious extremism, could appear. Given all this, one could really see the appearance of a tolerance in politics as expression of some form of freedom (in the Kantian's sense) - as combination of the conditions under which tyranny of one person can be balanced by the tyranny of another person, according to a principle of liberty common to such persons. Soft globalization gives to any political subject the opportunity to avoid in tolerant desires in world politics.

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